

POLICY AGENDA TO ADVANCE EQUITY 2025



INTRODUCTION

FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY (FIRST 5) WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1998 BY CALIFORNIA’S PROPOSITION 10.

Our “North Star,” the population result that guides our work, is that all children are ready for kindergarten. We are guided by a “whole community, whole family, whole child” policy and programming approach, and work at the intersection of racial, economic, climate, housing, and health justice to ensure that policies and systems support the conditions children, families, and communities need to thrive.

Systems building efforts require deep investments and time. To scale effective programs and promote equitable policies, we leverage insights from our work to inform systemic solutions across local, state, and federal levels in four key areas: Neighborhoods, Family, Health & Well-Being, and Learning & Care. This approach aims to achieve long-term stability and sustainability for families and communities.

First 5 agencies in California face significant challenges due to declining tobacco tax revenues, risking program cuts and layoffs. This threatens the early care and education infrastructure built over years. While First 5 Alameda is partially protected by two local child care measures that we administer—The Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children’s Health & Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)—we advocate for statewide sustainability efforts. These include exploring new funding streams and partnerships to ensure continuity of essential early childhood services, strengthening the foundation for California’s children and families.

FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY 2025 POLICY PRIORITIES



NEIGHBORHOODS

FAMILY, CAREGIVER & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Promote the lived experience, voice, leadership, and shared decision-making power of communities, families, and caregivers in policy development, program design, research, evaluation, data collection, and storytelling.

► Community-Centered Data & Research

Recognize families and communities as conveners, storytellers, and owners of data in the work to advance data-driven decision-making.

► Parent, Caregiver & Community Voice & Vitality

Elevate the strengths and social capital of historically underrepresented families and communities, including those with low income and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant, refugee, undocumented, LGBTQ+, and unhoused families.

THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS

Increase community-driven place-based investments and equitable economic development opportunities that address structural racism and disproportionate rates of poverty.

► Neighborhoods Ready for School

Resource community partnerships and collaborations to advance community-led place-based strategies, like our Neighborhoods Ready for School Initiative and Family Resource Centers, that support the multi-generational needs of families, support cross-system service coordination, and inform policy advocacy and service delivery.

► Family Friendly Communities

Increase investments in a sustainable built environment and public infrastructure to address equitable access to public transportation, affordable housing, safe parks and green spaces, free and affordable recreation activities, promotion of eco-friendly land use and development, and to support community and public safety.

► Equitable Community Economic Development

Increase job creation and workforce development opportunities with living wages, strengthen support for small businesses, and promote the use of public funds to provide economic opportunities for neighborhood residents.

► Climate & Environmental Justice

Disrupt and mitigate the impacts of gentrification, climate change, and extractive and exploitive economic policies in low-income and BIPOC communities by prioritizing policies and investments that support the local infrastructure and adaptations of environments children and families frequent.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Advance opportunities that support fair incomes and increase economic supports for families to meet their basic needs and create a safe, healthy, and enriching home environment.

► Income & Basic Needs

Promote opportunities to advance economic justice and increase economic supports for families such as child tax credits, Universal Basic Income, improvements to the public safety net, rental, utility, transportation assistance, nutritious affordable food, diapers and menstrual products, apprenticeships, and free and affordable secondary and technical education.

► Safe & Affordable Housing

Partner with community, private, and public partners to increase supports for unhoused pregnant people, families, and essential workforce. Protect and increase the supply and access of affordable and family-friendly housing options.

► Asset Building, Debt Relief & Credit Building

Support policies and programs that promote families' multi-generational financial stability and economic mobility such as college savings programs and fair credit and lending practices.

► Digital Equity

Increase equitable access to reliable, high-speed internet, devices to facilitate learning and economic development, and digital literacy supports.

COORDINATED SYSTEMS

Strengthen family-serving systems to facilitate access and delivery of services that support the health and well-being of families through culturally and linguistically responsive services that mitigate childhood adversity and support the diverse developmental, physical, and social needs of young children and their families.

► Father & Father-Figure Engagement

Promote the adoption and integration of the Father-Friendly Principles, Healthy Relationship Principles, and father and father-figure specific services across community programs and public systems.

► Child Welfare System

Promote family unity through anti-racist/classist policies and practices that center family and child outcomes.

► Incarcerated Families

Support children and families impacted by parental incarceration through policies such as those that increase reentry resources for families with young children and those that help families stay connected.



COORDINATED CARE

Create a seamless, accessible, and coordinated network of care that promotes child and family health and well-being through culturally congruent services to address physical, behavioral, developmental, dental, and social determinants of health.

▶ **Prevention & Early Identification (Screening)**

Scale and sustain strategies that address the unique needs of young children through continuous Medi-Cal eligibility for children 0-5, regular health screenings and well-child visits, early identification of developmental concerns, child development education, and family supports.

▶ **Coordinated Network of Care**

Support effective strategies like DULCE, Family Resource Centers, and Help Me Grow that support families with access and navigation to culturally and linguistically responsive services and resources to address growing early childhood mental health concerns.

▶ **Supported Workforce**

Promote workforce strategies like fair compensation, safe and supportive workplaces, access to professional development, and health and well-being benefits to grow, support, and diversify community and family-serving health workforce that are critical for the delivery of culturally and racially congruent care, e.g., community health workers/ promotoras/ representatives, doulas, midwives, certified lactation consultants, peer supporters, nurses, physicians, and behavioral health workers.

BIRTH EQUITY & REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

Promote the right to maintain personal bodily autonomy and champion safe, healthy, and joyous pregnancy, birth, and postpartum outcomes for Black , Pacific Islander, and Indigenous women and birthing people.

▶ **Workforce Development & Sustainability**

Support, expand, retain, and nurture the Black, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous birth justice workforce that supports families before, during, and after pregnancy such as midwives, doulas, physicians, nurses, lactation professionals, peer community supports, and others.

▶ **Community-Based Strategies**

Scale community-based strategies to disrupt inequities and disparities in birth outcomes such as lactation supports for Black birthing people, Universal Basic Income, access to comprehensive perinatal and postpartum care, full spectrum doula supports, group prenatal care, maternal mental health supports, and collection and analysis of culturally relevant data related to birth disparities and associated research.

▶ **Amplify Black & Indigenous Voices**

Center the voices and needs of Black, Pacific Islander, and Indigenous women, birthing people, and their families to address racism as the root cause in adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes.



EARLY LEARNING & CARE

ACCESS & QUALITY

Increase awareness and access to quality early care and education options offered through a diverse mixed-delivery system that builds on each child's unique individual and family strengths and affirms their cultural background, language(s), neurodiversity, and experiences.

► Connection to Care

Support family access to information, resources, and support to choose their preferred early care and education experience for their children through a robust and coordinated family navigation, data, and technology system.

► Kindergarten Transitions Supports

Expand access to year-round early care and education opportunities including kindergarten readiness activities and transition supports that are accessible to families within their community such as play groups, mental health supports, basic needs, and license exempt care such as family, friend, and neighbor providers.

► Facilities, Land Use & Capital Investments

Leverage opportunities and increase investments to support land use and capital investments for renovation, repair, expansion, and new construction of early learning facilities; co-location of child care facilities within new housing developments; and targeted strategies to address child care shortages, mediate and ameliorate persistent inequities in access to care, and improve the long-term financial well-being of the early care and education community.

► Family Centered Care

Promote cross-system communication, collaboration, and partnerships between the home, informal care settings (e.g., Family, Friend, and Neighbor care), early care and education professionals, community programs, and schools to support family access to care and health and well-being supports.

WORKFORCE

Leverage and deepen investments to stabilize, strengthen, and expand the diverse early care and education workforce through fair compensation, safe and supportive workplaces, business support, access to professional development, and health and well-being benefits.

► Early Childhood Apprenticeship

Leverage local, state, and federal employment funding to cultivate a diverse, well-qualified, and sustainable pipeline of early care and education professionals through programs like the Alameda County Early Education Apprenticeship Program, a public-private partnership that leverages CalWORKs employment dollars, Proposition 10 revenues, and philanthropic funds.

► Quality Jobs & Well-Being

Support advancements in fair compensation, opportunities for career advancement, professional development, quality enhancement, a supportive work environment, and a reasonable workload for early care and education professionals through supports like mental health consultation, the Child and Adult Care Food program, and business supports.

► Learning & Career Advancement

Promote workforce development opportunities such as reflective supervision for professionals working with children and families, coaching and mentoring programs, and scholarships for apprentices to obtain licenses, permits, AAs, BAs, and graduate degrees.